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Remarks / Arguments

In response to the Office Action dated July 1, 2004, Claims 94 to 116 have been amended as set out in the Listing of Claims enclosed herewith. Care has been taken to avoid the introduction of new matter and basis for the amendments made is set out below. Favorable reconsideration of this application as now amended is respectfully solicited. The paragraph numbering below refers to the Office of action of July 1, 2004.

Paragraph 2:

The Examiner's acknowledgement that the arguments filed by the applicant are sufficient to overcome the rejections based on Gerontopoulos et al, Weyand, Redd et al, Loomis et al and Giltsoff is noted with thanks.

Paragraph 3:

Claims 94-116 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

- A) The Examiner's objection has been overcome by the amendment of Claims 94, 102, 104, 105, 108 and 110 to specify that the components are provided in the proportions specified by weight of the feedstock.
- B) The Examiner's objection has been overcome by the deletion of the term "low molecular weight" from Claim 97, since the Examiner considers that the meaning of this term is indefinite. It would be clear to one skilled in the art that, as for the ethylene glycols and triethylene glycols

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also claimed, a range of types of polyethylene glycols could be used.

- C) The Examiner's objection to the term "substantially without melting" in Claim 109 has been overcome by amending the claim to specify that the bulk of the polymer granules do not liquefy. Support for this amendment can be found on Page 4 Line 5 of the application as filed.

Paragraph 6:

Claims 84-116 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over IE970280 in combination with applicant's own disclosure.

The Examiner's objection is in part respectfully traversed by the arguments set out below and in part overcome by the amendments made to Claims 94, 104 and 105. Claims 94, 104 and 105 have been amended to specify that the filler is a solid particulate filler. Support for this amendment can be found on Page 6 Lines 6-12.

IE970,280 (IE '280) discloses compositions comprising PVA, a plasticizer and a stabilizer component. However, it is submitted that IE '280 does not disclose the addition of a filler component to the composition and, further, does not disclose the combinations of components in the amounts specified in the claims.

The example compositions of IE '280 contain, at most, only PVA/PVAc, one or more plasticizer components and one or more stabilizer components. IE '280 does not expressly or impliedly teach or suggest the addition of a filler component and there is no suggestion or motivation in the document to modify the compositions to add a filler component.

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The vegetable based oils, including soya oil or corn oil, are clearly disclosed on Page 3 Line 26 of IE '280 as being possible plasticizer materials and their use as filler materials is not taught or suggested by the disclosure. Further, even if these oils were used as filler materials, they would not comprise solid particulate fillers and hence would not provide the advantages of the "bulking agent" fillers described in the present application, which may be incorporated into the composition to reduce the cost per unit weight of the composition, as discussed on Page 3 Lines 11-13.

The dependent claims are not discussed in detail here but, for the avoidance of doubt, it is noted that the defendant claims add further novel and inventive features over the prior art.

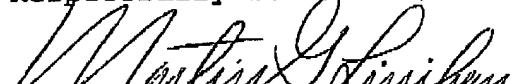
Paragraph 7:

The Examiner's Section 112 objections have been overcome by the amendments and arguments made herein.

The Examiner's objections based on IE 970,280 have been traversed by the arguments made herein.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the application as amended is now in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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